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FOR IO DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY GERALD ANDERSON FROM AMBASSADOR
KILLION

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNESCO](#) [AORC](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR NOVEMBER 24 VISIT OF IO DAS ANDERSON

¶1. (SBU) Summary: UNESCO's new Director-General Irina Bokova is under great pressure to come to decisions on appointing her team and reorganizing UNESCO's organizational structure. In doing so, she would like to take account of U.S. views (as well as others), but she must act fast or risk finding herself "home alone" with a team largely of lame duck holdovers not necessarily loyal to her or her goals. The U.S. has a unique opportunity to influence her personnel choices and restructuring plans, but the window will not be open long. It will be important to use your visit to come to some decisions. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Your visit comes at a critical moment. Irina Bokova took over from Koichiro Matsuura as UNESCO Director-General on November 15, and she is still in the early stages of deciding what administrative/management changes to make and what her program priorities are.

¶3. (SBU) Bokova has been very open and willing to meet with me. She readily admits her debt to the United States and is looking for ways to satisfy it. In our conversations, she has proposed various positions for an American in her administration. Shortly, after her election she suggested she would have two Deputy Directors-General (DDG) and that one would look after Administration. This one could be an American. More recently, she has suggested that the U.S. should have Assistant Director-General (ADG) Science. The DDG Admin position, if it is created, would go to an African - perhaps the current comptroller and Ethiopian native, Getachew Engida.

¶4. (SBU) My discussions with Bokova have been typical of the ones she is having with other ambassadors. She wants to satisfy as many as possible, but she does not have a clear and settled vision of how she wants to reorganize and staff UNESCO. This leads her to advance one proposed organization chart today and another tomorrow.

¶5. (SBU) I would like to emphasize that Bokova is under enormous pressure to act quickly. Matsuura did her no favors by making all ADG contracts expire in January 2010 and by finding onward assignments for all senior officers in his cabinet. Most of the latter will be gone by the end of this month. A lengthy vacancy announcement was issued for the ADG positions, but, following usual practice, the deadline for applications is December 27. Given UNESCO's cumbersome hiring procedures, it will take time to get everyone on board.

¶6. (SBU) Bokova cannot afford to be "home alone." She reportedly plans to extend some ADGs in their posts for several months, but having lameducks linger for extended periods is far from ideal. Given this situation, there will almost certainly be no extension of the December 27 applications deadline. If we want Americans to obtain any of these jobs, we will have to ensure that they apply on time and that we have an understanding in advance which job will go our way. This will form the principal topic in your meeting with her on November 24. If we do not want science but would prefer a different position/organizational arrangement, such as DDG Administration, you will need to speak clearly.

¶7. (SBU) We have a unique window of opportunity, but it will not remain open long. Bokova is under strong pressure from some member states to begin announcing decisions on appointments and UNESCO's future organization at the November 23 Executive Board session. The rules require her to consult the Board on structural changes.

¶8. (SBU) On program priorities, Bokova's preferences have also yet to gel. One thing clear is that there has been much talk in recent weeks here about the need to do something more on inter-cultural dialogue. Bokova herself called me last week to express concern about a draft Third Committee resolution that would have put the spotlight on the Alliance of Civilizations rather than UNESCO. (Thanks to our intervention the resolution was amended to include a mention of UNESCO). I expect Bokova early on to try to involve UNESCO more in efforts to promote inter-cultural understanding.

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